

Loughborough College

Alternative approaches to CPD



[Loughborough College](#) offers an extensive range of qualifications offering GCSE to degree level courses as well as vocational courses and Apprenticeships. Courses can be studied in a variety of ways including full time, part time and distance learning. The college welcomes over 11,000 students, with 9.9% of students declaring a learning difficulty and 6.5% of students declaring a disability. The Student Support and Development Team, includes 52 Learning Support Assistants (LSA) who work with students across college with identified support requirement

Our project:

We used the [LSIS guidance](#) to pilot the following forms of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to support practice and development:

- Shadowing
- Learn and Share
- Buddy Scheme

Shadowing:

The LSIS project allowed us to formalise a system that we already have in place. Shadowing is vital in the role of the LSA, staff fed back that it is a great way to meet staff within the team and work across curriculum areas. It also allows them to develop an understanding of the students they will be working with. We involved six new members of staff in the project to trial the paperwork. Those involved in the shadowing said they found the paperwork extremely helpful in reflecting on the process. They felt it gave them the opportunity to understand what they had gained from the experience, rather than it just being part of the induction process.

Learn and Share:

We have held six Learn and Share meetings within the first term, with 24 LSAs participating. The team were asked to choose a chair and also topics, and they choose the Support Coordinators to chair the meetings. The first meeting was a success with staff sharing practice and raised common issues and suggesting solutions.

The team of LSAs began to chair and run the meetings themselves, and this is the route we would like to continue with to empower staff to enhance their professional development and support each other and the service.

Due to the nature of the LSA's work it is difficult to find a time to bring the team together. Alternative times have been given to ensure everyone has had the opportunity to be involved. In the next academic year we will have a more structured approach so this becomes part of usual working practice.

Buddy scheme:

The buddy scheme has been the most successful part of the project. We have had 22 LSAs involved in this process, and those that haven't been involved are now keen to be a part of the scheme. The accompanying footage gives more information.

Future Plans:

We will be incorporating Learn and Share meetings and the buddy scheme into our Continual Professional Development programme for LSAs. We will now have a more formal approach to shadowing and continue to use the documents provided. We hope that by continuing with these strategies we will be empowering staff to reflect further on their practice, in turn developing the support services offered to students. We feel these tools could be helpful to all staff and hope that by sharing our success with colleges within the sector we will encourage others to use them.

[Listen to the staff at the College discuss the buddying scheme](#)